



Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

Voluntary Report - public distribution

Date: 9/26/2000

GAIN Report #JA0099

Japan

Fresh Deciduous Fruit

U.S. Fresh Nectarines Gain Market Access

2000

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Report Highlights:

On August 30, the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture (MAFF) approved access for all varieties of U.S. nectarines. During the late 1980's MAFF approved 10 varieties, but a phytosanitary ban had been in place on the remaining varieties. The Japanese fresh nectarine market is still relatively small with wholesale value estimated at \$10 million. Japanese traders expect new import opportunities for the new varieties from the United States, especially the white flesh types. The first shipment of the new varieties is scheduled to arrive in early September.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Tokyo [JA1], JA

Executive Summary

On August 30, the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture (MAFF) approved access for all varieties of U.S. nectarines. During the late 1980's MAFF approved 10 varieties, but a phytosanitary ban had been in place on the remaining varieties.

According to some industry sources, Japanese traders are optimistic about business opportunities with U.S. fresh nectarines. In particular, the white flesh varieties, newly approved for importation this year, are reported to be in demand. The Japanese industry is expecting the first arrival of nectarines from the United States in early September. Sales promotional events are being scheduled at Japan's major supermarket chains.

Other traders are reported to be more cautious about marketing U.S. nectarines, recalling less than successful business experiences with U.S. nectarines in the late 1980's. After the market for U.S. fresh nectarines opened in 1988, Japan imported a total volume of only 180 metric tons. Despite Japanese retailers' heavy promotional efforts, sales of U.S. nectarines did not expand as anticipated. The importation tapered off very quickly and there have been no imports since 1990. The hard flesh texture and taste of U.S. nectarines were not favored by Japanese consumers.

The overall success of marketing the white flesh U.S. varieties in Japan remains to be seen.

The Japanese fresh nectarine market is estimated at approximately \$10 million wholesale value. Only locally grown fresh nectarines are distributed in Japan with the annual disposition of approximately 3,000 metric tons. Nearly all nectarines sold are grown in Nagano and Yamanashi prefectures in July and August. Japanese production of nectarines is rapidly declining. Japanese fresh nectarines are traded at approximately 400 yen (\$3.77) per kilogram and often sold at 400 - 500 yen (\$3.77 - \$4.71) for a plastic container of 5 - 6 pieces in Tokyo supermarkets. The current import duty for fresh nectarines (HS code: 0809.30-000) is 6.0%.

